

TIL TAYLOR IS NOT HERE—ONE SAD FEATURE OF THE 1920 ROUND-UP

Some Interesting Facts About the "Greatest Sheriff East—
ern Oregon Has Known."

Pendleton's 1920 Round-Up celebrated its eleventh anniversary today with its opening, larger, better, stronger than ever. There was but one feature of past Round-Ups missing, but that feature was greatly missed. The figure of Til Taylor, for eight years president of the association, is also missing.

The big handsome leader of the Round-Up association, who for years past had ridden his horse past admiring throngs, is gone on more to return. He fell in line of duty, Sunday, July 25, 1920, in his office as sheriff of Umatilla county. A bullet from a pistol in the hands of Neil Hart, a dangerous outlaw, resulted fatally for the most popular official Umatilla county ever had.

Til Taylor met his death upholding the law, protecting the citizens of his county and state from bandits running at large. His slayers made their getaway after the fatal shot had been fired, it happened, but loyal friends numbered into hundreds recaptured all five who broke jail that Sunday afternoon and had them lodged once again behind the bars of the county jail the following Saturday night after one of the most exciting man hunts ever recorded in the northwest.

Taking Til Taylor from Pendleton and Umatilla county was like removing the heart from the living body to the thousands who knew him. From a determined effort to bring his slayers to justice, the populace turned, with that accomplished, to a move to honor his memory with a suitable memorial. Ere charges of murder had been filed against his slayers, the Til Taylor Memorial Association had been formed and is now on the high road to success.

Death was taken away from the Round-Up and from the community, the man beloved by all. His memory, however, cannot go with him, they declare. Hence, while there is that void in the Round-Up that is not to be filled, his thousands of friends hope to perpetuate that memory with a statue of bronze, as Til Taylor was at the Round-Up.

To those whose fortune it was to know him, the sheriff was just "Til." The short, homely monosyllabic who was called to him in friendly greeting many times each day, was always acknowledged by a smile and a pleasant word or more in a voice of even tenor. There was the handicap for the friend who came from beyond the limits of Pendleton, but it was always of the sincere kind. There were no shouts and waving of hands from the big sheriff as he greeted friends upon the street. Til Taylor was no grandstand player.

Listened To All

There was no feigning of interest in the tale which the friend from near or far might tell him. Crop prospects, neighborhood news or reports of happenings which might be considered of importance to the sheriff were received

ed alike. From these bits of conversation Sheriff Taylor made not alone friends, but often the chain of evidence of a case or a man. In not a few instances tips from such sources made difficult captures more easy.

Old settlers, men of business, young men, children, women and girls were all numbered among his friends. His was not just a speaking acquaintance. He knew names and he remembered faces. "Til never forgot a face," said one of his former deputy sheriffs.

Admittedly one of the most successful peace officers in the Northwest, Sheriff Taylor never became hardened to the routine of handling criminals. Twenty-two years of his life were spent as sheriff and deputy sheriff of Umatilla county, yet his interests were as those of a man divorced from the serious business of handling delinquents, perverts and criminals.

It was not Til Taylor's business to get into a rut. He saw too much in life to let his path become a groove. He made human nature a keen study and public service an avocation. During his service as sheriff of Umatilla county, 2643 arrests were made. Spread over 18 years, this number gives an average of 147 a year, one every 2 1/2 days.

All Gave Confidence

Criminals ranging from petty thieves to bold murderers served time in the Umatilla county jail under Til Taylor's regime. Some were harmless some exceedingly dangerous. It was a faculty of his to elicit the respect and confidence of them all.

In 1914, after a notable holdup occurred on fast mail train No. 5 of the O.-W. R. & N. on the mountain between La Grande and Pendleton, officers at La Grande were about to give up two suspects, Albert Meadows and Clarence Stoner, because they were unable to wring a confession from the pair. Meadows and Stoner had been taken alive after a chase lasting two days and nights over much the same character of country as was traveled by the murderers of Sheriff Taylor. Charley Manning, their confederate, was killed during the holdup by George McDuffie, now sheriff of Morrow county, who was a passenger.

Sheriff Taylor, who had been in Portland at the time of the holdup, went to La Grande to assist his fellow officers in the case. He talked with the two suspects and finally got them to talk. His manner brought out the story where others had failed almost to the point of turning the two free. Meadows and Stoner took Sheriff Taylor and E. B. Wood, special agent for the O.-W. R. & N. Co., to their cache near Meacham and dug up money, diamonds, guns and other loot they had taken in the robbery. One gave his pistol to the sheriff as a souvenir; the other gave his to Wood. Both men were later convicted and served time.

The number of confessions which the late sheriff elicited from prisoners



Bulldogging a Steer

is claimed by fellow workers as almost uncanny. Dozens of men against whom the threat of evidence was slight never exercised the prerogative of a not guilty plea. The sheriff was able to convince them of their guilt and to advise them against trying to evade the fact. In saving the county the expense of costly jury trials alone Sheriff Taylor's service was of inestimable value, his friends point out.

Possessed Keen Eye

Confessions were not obtained by brow beating methods of third degree. Sheriff Taylor was a psychologist of a nature peculiar to himself. He possessed an eye as clear as keen and as gripping as a magic crystal. He looked any man in the eye without a flinch. He talked coolly and evenly to his men. He neither pleaded nor coerced. It was friendly advice, sound counsel, that he gave. A man's face, his actions, his responses, showed him whether guilty or not guilty. Few ever were held long who were not guilty.

This same trait that established in his mind the guilt or innocence of the prisoner led also to many captures of suspects. Instinct guided Sheriff Taylor to the hiding places of many whom he sought. The habits of criminals were as second nature to him. Not a few times he arrested men who were cuckoo of their safety from apprehension. He was a "good sport" to those way of thinking and they generally admired him for his superiority of maneuvering.

The keen, convincing eye; the power behind it, the analytical mind, the gentleness, yet impenetrable firmness of the man are qualities attributable to the clean life he lived. An athlete in his youth, Til Taylor spent much of his life in the great outdoors, a lover of animals as well as his fellow man. He never used tobacco nor an excess of intoxicants. He used his brain and his physical faculties constantly.

Shot at One Man

The only man Til Taylor ever shot at during his 22 years as a sheriff and deputy was Frank Pillsner, a bank robber. A hot chase for the capture of this bandit followed the robbery of the bank at Hermiston a few years ago. Pillsner opened fire on the sheriff and he returned the fire until his scant stock of ammunition was exhausted. Neither man was struck by bullets. Pillsner made good his escape.

A short time later the bandit was arrested and placed in the Multnomah county jail. Sheriff Taylor went to Portland to identify him. From pictures he had seen in the gallery maintained in his office here he picked Pillsner out of more than 50 prisoners in the jail. The sheriff had that face stamped indelibly in his mind.

"Any other officer in this county would have shot and killed Jim Owens and Neil Hart during the chase that resulted in their capture on Birch creek," Deputy Sheriff Jacob C. Martin said. "It was a wonder that they did not shoot Til then. He did not use his gun, however. He never fired it at any other captives."

Thirty-four men have broken out of the Umatilla county jail in the 18 years Til Taylor was sheriff, records show. Two of them never were brought back. Of these, one was located in Michigan, but slipped through the fingers of the men sent to take him. The other was in Leavenworth, Kas., prison and was not deemed worth bringing back. The others were returned to jail here, directly or indirectly, without ever a shot having been fired by the sheriff the men immediately with him.

Both as an officer and as a citizen, Sheriff Taylor did his duty with thoroughness. As an aid to his work he assembled and maintained one of the largest galleries of criminal photographs on the Pacific coast. He had finger prints and measurements made of all important criminals and the photographs and circulars filed in his office number into thousands. Records of captures, jail breaks, sentences, paroles and other data were also kept up to date.

Til Taylor was a native Oregonian, a fearless, sturdy son of the Northwest. He was born, September 19, 1866, at Howell Prairie, nine miles from Salem. At the age of 2 years he came, with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Taylor, to Umatilla county. They settled at Centerville, now Athena, where his mother still resides. David Taylor died in March at the age of 89 years.

Studied in Portland

Schools in Athena and Walla Walla were attended by Til Taylor and in the winter of 1884 and 1885 he studied at the old Armstrong Business college, in Portland. Upon his return to Athena in 1889 he became bookkeeper in the hardware store operated by C. A. Barrett.

Sheriff Taylor was first married in 1899, Miss Sadie Smith of Athena being his bride. To them was born a son, Sheldon D. Taylor, December 27, 1891. The son operates a wheat farm near Pendleton. Mrs. Taylor passed away in 1896, following which he came

to Pendleton to work in the W. D. Hansford hardware store.

In June, 1898, he became a deputy sheriff under Sheriff William Blakeley and served four years in that capacity. The incumbent retired in 1902 and Taylor ran and was elected. Never since 1902 has another candidate defeated him for office, although Umatilla county registers a majority vote of Republicans and Sheriff Taylor was a Democrat.

In 1903 Sheriff Taylor married Miss Claire Mousse of Pendleton, who survives him. Mrs. Ann Taylor, his mother, and W. R. Taylor, his brother, both of Athena, are other close surviving relatives.

When the Pendleton Round-Up had its inception in 1910, Sheriff Taylor was one of the organizers. He was president continuously after the first two years and had been reelected this year to the position. The figure of the big, handsome sheriff on horseback, seen year after year at the head of Round-Up parades, was known to hundreds of thousands who have come to Pendleton for the last 10 years. During one Rose Festival the sheriff served as "King Joy" in Portland.

Active in Civic Work

In fraternal and civic work Sheriff Taylor was not found lacking. Although details of the Round-Up called heavily upon his time, he served gladly on boards of various undertakings. Twice he was offered the superintendency of the state prison as a tribute to his service as a peace officer, but declined.

Friends of the deceased sheriff, whose number is legion, now feel that a lasting memorial to his memory is the least tribute they can pay. The deeds he did, the virtues for which he stood and the lesson of unselfish service they desire to commemorate. Pendleton already has chosen an organization to form the Til Taylor Memorial association. This will be statewide in nature. A bronze statue of the beloved officer on his pony, as he was remembered at the Round-Up, is favored. A monument to which the folk of today will point tomorrow to their children and their children's children as a source of pride of the community and county which he served.

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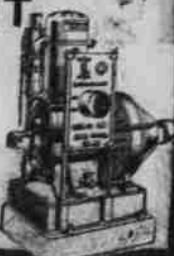
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